THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) As per the information received from the private operators, the total investment in the major telecom service sector by private operators upto 31.3.2000 is approximately Rs. 16564.38 crores. Break-up is as under:—

Basic Services	— Rs. 3,605.48 Crores
Cellular Mobile Telecom Service	— Rs. 11,860.91 Crores
V-SAT	— Rs. 184.52 Crores
Mobile Radio Trunk Service	— Rs. 250.00 Crores
paging Service	— Rs. 663.47 Crores

The break up of private investment during the 9th five-year plan is not available.

(b) and (c) Indian companies with foreign partners had participated in the tender invited for providing Basic Telephone Service in the country. The company providing Basic Telephone service can have up to 49% Foreign direct investment. Licences have been granted to six such companies for providing Basic Telephone Service in the circles. Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Maharashtra (including Mumbai), Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh & Gujarat. Further, as per NTP'99, Basic Telephone Service has been opened for free competition. The roll out obligation of the existing licenses of Basic Telephone Service includes coverage of rural and uneconomic areas.

Profit of VSNL

214. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the net profit of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) has shown an increase of 87 percent in the year 2000-2001;

(b) whether it is also a fact that during the period VSNL turnover has increased by 8 per cent only; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons for such an abnormal increase in the net profit of the company?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Net profit of VSNL has increased by 111% in the year 2000-2001.

(b) Turnover during the year has increased by 10.30%.

(c) The net profit for the year ended 31.3.2000 was adversely affected due to write-off of Rs. 512.75 crores in respect of ICO investment. Had this write-off not been required to be made, the profit for the year 31.3.2000 would have been Rs. 1352.02 crores and the current year profit would be higher only by 31%. This increase in the net profit in 2000-2001 has been due to:

(i) Growth in International telephone volume by 20%.

(ii) Growth in International Private Land Circut (IPLC), Frame Relay, Internet Services.

(iii) Increase in other income.

Illegal Call Racket in Sanchar Bhavan

215. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "Sanchar Bhawan turns into illegal PCO" which appeared in the Hindustan Times dated the 29th June, 2001;

(b) if so, whether the telephone lines in the Sanchar Bhavan are grossly misused by unscrupulous persons causing loss to Government;

(c) whether several private telephone operators are also involved in the racket; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to check such racket?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The matter is under investigation by the Crime Branch of the Delhi Police. FIRs have been lodged by the Crime Branch of the Delhi Police. The matter has also been brought before the Court of Law by the Delhi Police.